

## CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

## INFORMATION REPORT

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Camp Culture

1. In every larger forced labor camp, there was a Cultural-Educational Division (Kulturno-vospitatelnaya chast - KVCh). Two rooms in one barrack were set aside for books and magazines. Films were shown in the dining hall. There were few technical books and all were in Russian some Turgenev, Gogol, Lermontov, and Pushkin. There were also some works in translation, as Karl Marx and Anatole France. In each barrack, one copy of Pravda was available, but few prisoners read the paper. There was also a local paper, published daily, in Magadan, called the Sovetskaya Kolyma. It had only about two pages and arrived irregularly. To attend the film shows, prisoners had to pay 2.50 rubles per ticket. These shows were given two or three times a month. The films were mostly Soviet, with a sprinkling of foreign films. The Soviet films were boring, usually about kolkhozy, war, or the opera. Following are the titles of films shown in the camps:
  - a. Soviet films: "Meeting on the Elbe"; "Suvorov"; "Chapayev"; "The Stone Flower"; "Sadko and Maksimka". The last was about a little negro boy abandoned by the Americans and picked up by Soviet sailors; in one scene a single Soviet sailor knocked out 20 Americans.
  - b. French films: "Lowest Rank" (poslednogo ranga), about a boxer; "Address Unknown" (adres neizvestno).

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- c. Italian films: "Places in Town" (mesta na gorode), about slums in Italy; "Paillazzo"; "Come Back to the Circus" (Vernis na arenu).

#### Radio Broadcasts and Amnesty of Prisoners in 1953

2. There was a loudspeaker in camp which gave mostly Radio Moscow or Khabarovsk. At the time of Stalin's death, there were numerous news bulletins on his health and then suddenly the radio was turned off. Shortly thereafter, when the prisoners were going to work they passed a garrison where the Soviet flag was draped in black and they rejoiced. Many rumors about impending changes were heard, but Stalin's death had no effect on the political prisoners. The amnesty was only for the criminal prisoners. During the Korean War, the prisoners heard only the Soviet radio, which gave mostly reports about the number of prisoners taken and airplanes shot down. The prisoners were very skeptical and believed little of what they heard.
3. The amnesty for criminals had little lasting effect. Many of them were freed, as was announced in the press and on the radio, but after a month or two some 80 percent were back in camp. One thief was returned to prison four times.

#### Camp Organizations: Criminal Groups

4. There were no organizations among political prisoners. They all disliked the government and hoped for war. They waited for the arrival of the Americans year after year. The only organization among political prisoners that source knew was a small group of about 15 people who got together to give a production of "Don Juan". They also had a small orchestra, made up mostly of strings, which gave an occasional concert. Criminal prisoners always had organizations but not against the government. All camps for criminals were divided into two main factions, the thieves (vori) and their enemies, the turncoats or suki. The suki were those who had agreed to do some work, mostly for the camp administration. The fights between the two groups were continuous and often lead to killings. Between these two groups were the independents (freyer: sic) who were afraid of both sides. The proportions were about 60 percent thieves, 30 percent traitors, and 10 percent independents. A special group, cutting across the others were the blatnoy who refused to work, posed, smoked, and struck the innocent.
5. [redacted] blat was the same as prostitution (sic), which was extensive. 25X1

#### Health and Sanitation

6. Drinking water in the Third Factory Camp came from a well in summer. In winter, ice was cut in the Seymchan River and dumped into a tank which stood near the stove in each barrack. [redacted] 25X1
7. The prisoners had little protection against the cold; they did have gloves. Frost-bite was common, [redacted] at least 20 cases in which frozen hands, legs, or arms had to be amputated. 25X1
8. For one or two months in summer, mostly June and July, mosquitoes were very numerous, particularly in the woods. For sleeping at night, prisoners had a canvas hood, with mosquito netting in front of the face.
9. Guards and officials seemed healthy. All prisoners suffered from a variety of diseases, most of them caused by malnutrition and lack of vitamins. Fruit, milk, and vegetables, except cabbage, were never given to prisoners. One prevalent disease, caused by vitamin deficiency, was called tsynge (scurvy). The person affected had pits in his lips and had trouble moving his legs, and his skin became covered with many small sores. One remedy for tsynge was found by crushing the

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leaves of a small tree (slonik or slanik /sic/) and drinking them in hot water. The taste was very bitter and the remedy apparently affected the heart, but was effective against the disease. Tuberculosis was rather common. In Third Factory Camp there were over 35 cases among 1,000 inmates. About 20 of these were taken to the hospital at Levyi Bereg.<sup>1</sup> The others were isolated in one barrack and excused from work. High blood pressure, up to 250, was another disease from which about 40 percent of the prisoners suffered. The remedy was bleeding. One hundred or 200 grams of blood were taken at various intervals, either every other month or twice in six months. There were about 60 cases of jaundice and much rheumatism. Those who worked in the mines had silicosis but had to go on working.

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There were no venereal diseases as there were no women. Syphilis was prevalent in women's camps where a few male prisoners worked as carpenters, plumbers, etc. Some guards had syphilis.

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Penicillin was very scarce and given only in extreme cases;

The other remedy was alpha glucose (floroza kaltsiya) which was injected into the veins.

10. The camp hospital consisted of one barrack which had 50 to 60 beds. They were always filled. There was one free doctor, one prisoner doctor, and two or three prisoners who acted as feldshery. Two or three prisoners functioned as orderlies (sanitar). The first doctor was a Polish woman, Antonina Ivanova (Imu), who was a senior lieutenant (starshiy leytenant). She left in 1951 and was replaced by Major Antipov's wife. The hospital barrack was divided into various wards, partitioned off, for tubercular patients, those with jaundice, and others.

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11. The toilets were in one barrack with 12 places and were relatively clean.

12. The food was extremely monotonous. Prisoners ate twice a day, morning and night. The menu was always the same: Soup, kasha, tea, and bread, for which the normal ration was 800 grams. There was only canned meat, and small quantities were dropped in the soup. The soup was mostly cabbage, with a little potato. The cooking was done in big kettles, fired with wood.

#### Identification of Political Prisoners

13. Camps in the Kolyma area were usually attached to an industrial installation, such as a mine, a factory, or woods where prisoners did lumbering work. Political prisoners who worked in a factory received a number which appeared on their caps, back of jackets, shirts, underwear, and trousers.

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Many different letters of the alphabet were used but were always followed by the figure "1" or "2". The last number often went into five and six-digit figures.

#### Discount System for Overfulfillment of Work Norms

14. In the Third Factory Camp at Lazo (N 63-31, E 152-10), there was a discount system for work days (zaschet). The maximum discount was three days for one. According to how much a prisoner overfulfilled his norm, the discount was as follows:

##### Norm Fulfillment

##### Discount

120 percent

One-half day

135 percent

One day

150 percent

Two days.

#### Prisoner Attitudes

15. Since there were many polar bears in the Kolyma region, a common saying was that there the Tayga was law and the bear the public prosecutor (zakon tayga, prokuror medved).

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